



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

party, and a hundred others, are all good materials for a novel ; but when we come to a contrast of French and English literature, and dip into philosophy and metaphysics, in other parts of the book, comparisons are suggested to the prejudice of the novel.

In a work containing so much good writing, we are surprised to find the following phrases, which are wholly new to us, and seem to be as paltry an innovation in the use of words, as we remember to have met with in any respectable book ; viz. '*directly* I or any other of his friends was injured, his anger was implacable.' (Vol. i. ch. 2.) 'She pressed me to come and see her *directly* she returned to London.' (Vol. i. ch. 8.) '*Directly* Glanville's door was opened, I saw that I had come too late.' (Vol. ii. ch. 23.) '*Thornton* said, *directly we had passed him*, "He is *Tyrrell's enemy.*"' (Vol. ii. ch. 28.) The author is evidently smitten with admiration of this poor grammatical deformity ; for he studiously introduces it, though there are enough equivalent phrases, as well sounding, and at the same time good English.

Were a good novel a more rare production, we should have much more to say of the excellencies and defects of this, which, liable as it is to the gravest exceptions on account of its moral lessons, is certainly one of very high character for striking portraits, richness of thought, strength and originality of conception, and vivacity and energy of style.

ART. IX.—*An American Dictionary of the English Language* ; intended to exhibit, I. The Origin, Affinities, and Primary Signification of English Words, as far as they have been ascertained. II. The genuine Orthography and Pronunciation of Words, according to general Usage, or to just Principles of Analogy. III. Accurate and discriminating Definitions, with numerous Authorities and Illustrations. To which are prefixed, an Introductory Dissertation on the Origin, History, and Connection of the Languages of Western Asia and of Europe, and a Concise Grammar of the English Language. By NOAH WEBSTER, LL. D. In two volumes. 4to. New York. S. Converse. 1828.

WHEN it was announced to the public, that this work, which was known to have been so long in the hands of the author, was

at length ready for the press, we determined to hold ourselves free from all previous bias, either for or against it ; and to form our opinion of its merits solely from actual examination. More than usual caution seemed to be demanded by the somewhat peculiar circumstances which had attended the progress of this undertaking. The author, it is well known, met with much opposition at the commencement of his labors ; and it is equally notorious, that as he proceeded in the accomplishment of his design, he was seldom cheered with the voice of encouragement and approbation.

At first it was objected by many, whose stations in the community, and whose literary character, claimed from the public more than ordinary attention, that a new dictionary of the English language was not wanted ; that the language, so far as words were necessary or convenient, or even of allowable use, was already embodied in the dictionary of Johnson ; that to enlarge the vocabulary would be to debase the pure sterling of English speech ; and that anything additional, therefore, in English lexicography, would be both superfluous and injurious. Others, without denying that a new English dictionary might be useful if properly executed, were strongly impressed with the opinion, that the business of improving on those already in use, belonged, by a kind of exclusive right, to the scholars of the parent country. Lexicography, it was said, was a species of literary labor, which could be successfully prosecuted only where literature and the arts had attained a greater maturity than they could hope to reach on this side of the Atlantic, for a long time to come ; and, as an obvious consequence from this position, it was maintained, that the attempt in question savored of presumption unbecoming our years. But what was especially condemned, was the proposition to introduce into the contemplated dictionary, new words and new senses of words, of American origin. This was loudly denounced as a project, the plain tendency of which was to corrupt our speech, the noblest part of our inheritance from our ancestors, by giving currency and show of legitimacy to local vulgarisms. A not less formidable obstacle existed in a general, but not very accurately defined apprehension in the public mind,—how this originated it is not now important to inquire,—that in this dictionary some plot was contriving against the purity of the language ; and that the great landmarks of our mother tongue were about to be shaken or removed. In the face,

however, of all objections, and amidst many discouragements more strictly personal, the author has persevered steadily and resolutely in his work to its final accomplishment.

There is something in this firmness of purpose, which commands respect. A work executed amidst embarrassments, and in despite of censure, and even obloquy, presents claims to a candid examination, which it would be difficult to resist. Not that perseverance in any literary project is of itself sufficient to excuse, much less to conceal, real faults. All that is claimed on this score, is, that as such perseverance shows strong conviction in the author, of the correctness of his course, more than common attention is due in settling the justness of his pretensions.

Whether all the objections at first raised against this undertaking, were well or ill founded, we will not now inquire. One of them, which originated in the belief that the subject of English lexicography was exhausted by Johnson, would probably now be urged by no one. A late English editor has added so many words to the vocabulary, words in many instances of ordinary and necessary use, that the evidence on this point is complete. A little reflection will show, that the fact cannot be otherwise. The language of a people active and enterprising, free in the choice of their pursuits, and unrestrained in their discussions, must constantly become more copious. New words will be introduced, and old words will be used in new senses. If this were not the case, if the English language were now the same in all respects, as when Dr Johnson compiled his dictionary, and if it could be found in books which had then been published, still the supposition that nothing of importance to the student of English, could be gleaned from the volumes which Johnson examined, has little appearance of probability, and is unsupported by any analogous case. The lexicon of the Latin language, by Facciolati and Forcellini, the product of long and laborious study, though published nearly twenty years after the English dictionary of Johnson, has yet received, since its first appearance, a valuable addition in the supplement of Cognolato. Nor has the progress of improvement in Latin lexicography stopped here. The late London edition of this great work contains a further supplement, equal to almost a tenth part of the whole; and in the third Italian edition, now in the press, the editor promises five thousand words not to be found in the second, with

ten thousand corrections and additions in the definitions. But here is a language, which had dictionaries already existing in a highly improved state, which is contained in comparatively a few volumes; and these, through the labors of critics and commentators, affording every facility for rapid as well as thorough research.

Considering, therefore, the wide range of the English vocabulary; the greatly diversified character of the authors who have written in our language; and the new and ever-varying applications of words, from the changes constantly occurring in objects of general pursuit and interest, the author of the 'American Dictionary of the English Language' must be allowed to have engaged in an undertaking, which, considered by itself, argues neither vanity nor presumption. He has entered a field, cultivated but in part, and constantly enlarging, and in which there is abundant room and demand for additional labor.

In thus maintaining that Johnson's dictionary, when first published, was imperfect, nothing more is intended, than that its author did not do, what no human powers were ever able to accomplish; and in asserting that his work is insufficient for present use, whatever might have been its merits at first, we say no more than that it is not what it is impossible such a work should be. To derogate from the just praises of Johnson is no part of our object. We claim to be considered among his ardent admirers, and to have a due sense of the obligation the English language is under to his labors; and if we dissent from the commendations bestowed upon him, it is only when we hear ascribed to his work the attribute of perfection. To see the real value of what Johnson has done in lexicography, his dictionary should be compared with those which preceded it. By such comparison, the advance which he made in this department of literature appears in its true light; and it is then that his deserts are distinctly recognised and acknowledged.

The 'American Dictionary of the English Language' claims attention on the ground, that it exhibits a more full and correct view of the etymological part of our language, than has before been published; that it furnishes a larger vocabulary than the dictionaries which have preceded it; and that it contains valuable improvements, not only in the definitions of words, but in orthography, and the rules of pronunciation. To give a full and detailed account of what the author has undertaken in

each of these departments, much less to decide on the exact value of what he has accomplished, is not aimed at in the present notice of the work. Amidst subjects so multifarious as enter into the composition of a copious dictionary, the time and labor requisite to settle every question which might arise, even if the attention should be confined to points of acknowledged importance, approximate in some degree to the time and labor expended by the author himself. There are also in a dictionary peculiar difficulties in the way of a hasty decision on its merits. The etymologies may be erroneous, and the definitions correct; or the etymologies good, and the definitions bad. Or the definitions may be accurate in certain departments, and faulty in others; and the same may hold true of the etymologies. Such a work, from its very nature, may admit of great defects, in union with great excellencies; and this, not only in the etymological and defining parts, but in the extent and nature of its vocabulary, and in its orthography and pronunciation.

The danger, or rather the folly, of condemning a work so extensive as a dictionary of a cultivated language, when the examination has proceeded no farther than to a few words or classes of words, was never perhaps more fully exemplified than in the literary history of the dictionary of Dr Johnson. Here the labor of years was weighed in the short space of days, or even hours, and declared to be wanting. In despite, however, of such criticism, the work has found its true level in English literature; and the revilings of its violent and precipitate opponents are remembered only to warn others, who may be tempted to enter on so rash a career. With these views of the difficulty of instituting a full and thorough examination of so elaborate a work, and of the probable failure of an attempt at once to satisfy all inquiries, much more to anticipate the judgment of the next generation, very little more will now be attempted than a few general remarks, designed rather to invite attention to the subject of English lexicography at large, than to decide absolutely, in all respects, on the merits of the work under review.

Etymology deserves to hold a conspicuous place in an English dictionary. Our language is, perhaps, more than that of any other people, compounded of various, and, as might have been thought beforehand, jarring materials. Dr Johnson indulges in no exaggeration when he says, that 'in search of the progenitors of our speech, we may wander from the tropic

to the frozen zone, and find some in the valleys of Palestine, and some upon the rocks of Norway.' The Teutonic part of our language, and that portion of it introduced through the Norman-French, make up a great majority of our words. Our obligations to these two great sources of our vocabulary are stated somewhat quaintly, but still in an amusing manner, by Howell, a lexicographer in the early part of the reign of Charles the Second. 'The Englishman,' says this author, 'is High-Dutch, *cap-à-pie*, from top to toe ; go to the parts of his body, inward and outward, together with his coverings and cloths ; he is Dutch in drinking, in eating, at bed and at board, by sea also, and by land, when he steers a ship or drives the plough ; in his numbers, in the days of the week, in his kindred, in the church and holy things. But in hawking, in hunting, in heraldry, in fencing, in riding, in painting, in dancing, in music, in *aires*, he is all French ; insomuch that it cannot be denied but if the English tongue should repay unto the Dutch and French all she owes, she would prove a stark bankrupt, and be as bare as *Aesop's crow*.' To console us, however, for what might be thought the disgrace of shining in borrowed plumes, he adds ; 'Nor is it any derogation for the English language to be descended of the High-Dutch or Teutonic, which is so ancient a maternal tongue, that Bceanus thinks it was the language of Paradise ; and the Italian did merrily twit him in that opinion when he said, that it was the tongue wherein Adam was cast out thence, being a rough and cartilaginous or boney speech, in regard to the collision of so many consonants, that if a man were to be worded to death, or stoned to death by words, the High-Dutch were the fittest.'

But though etymology is highly important, in giving a full exhibition of a language, and especially of such a language as the English, still it has long had to contend with many obstinate and deep-rooted prejudices. Even in the time of Varro, the sentiment of the learned of the age must be considered not very favorable to this science ; as this distinguished author, whose reputation might be supposed sufficiently high to silence ordinary opposition, found it necessary, in his work '*de Lingua Latina*', to begin with answering objections to etymological inquiries, before he proceeded to the subject itself. In the introduction to his fourth book, addressed to his friend Cicero, referring to what he had written on etymology in the books which preceded it, he says he had already considered 'que

contra eam dicerentur, volumine primo ; quæ pro eâ, secundo ; quæ de eâ, tertio ;' thus giving his defence of etymology twice the extent of the exposition of the topic itself. It would afford no common gratification to the lovers of etymological research, to be indulged with the perusal of these volumes, the loss of which we have to deplore. But that etymology has need of able defenders, and that even the talents and learning of Varro were insufficient to stop all cavil, may be inferred from what later writers among the ancients have incidentally remarked. Even St Augustine, in his *Dialectics*, speaks of the investigation of the origin of words as a vain pursuit, being in his opinion no less uncertain in its result, than the interpretation of dreams. 'Ut somniorum interpretatio, ita verborum origo, pro cuiusque ingenio prædicatur.' The estimates, likewise, which etymologists have formed of each other's labors, have had no tendency to exalt them in the opinion of those who were not adepts in this science. If they have ever been listened to with undivided attention, and gained general credit, it has been in their attempts to detect each other's errors, and to demonstrate the false principles on which particular etymologies have been grounded. Sir William Jones, referring to Bryant's 'Analysis of Ancient Mythology,' remarks concerning that work of his 'learned friend,' that 'the least satisfactory part of it seems to be that which relates to the derivation of words from Asiatic languages ;' meaning, no doubt, that this part of the work has failed to afford any satisfaction whatever ; in which opinion there are others who would agree with him. That Sir William himself has not sufficiently guarded his language on the use of *vowels* in tracing etymologies, has been shown by Dr Webster. But it is unnecessary to go into details here.

The principal reasons of the disrepute and even contempt into which etymological inquiries have sometimes fallen, appear to be these ; the want of proper qualifications in those who have often taken it upon themselves to judge of their value ; and the extravagancies into which some celebrated etymologists have been carried. These reasons have mutually strengthened each other. The want of a thorough acquaintance with the subject has led many to suspect extravagance and fancy where none existed ; and, on the other hand, real etymological errors have deterred scholars from pursuing a subject, in which they have been led to believe, that not merely certainty, but that even probability is unattainable. Etymology, likewise,

has been a favorite subject of caricature, and attempts in this way have not always been without success. A few wild etymological speculations, somewhat distorted if necessary, brought forward in an imposing manner, have been sufficient to throw an air of ridicule over the whole pursuit; nor is it strange, that the effect should be to alarm and discourage those, who might otherwise be disposed to cultivate this branch of philology. Perhaps likewise truth requires it to be said, that in etymology there are more than usual dangers of being misled by fanciful analogies. In all inquiries, where conjecture is in any degree allowable, and the results are matters of opinion rather than of knowledge, the human mind has been prone to overleap the barriers of common sense, in the pursuit of a favorite theory. It would be strange, then, if in etymology, where the guides to investigation are so few and uncertain, the same mental obliquity should not be observed; if fancy should not often be found without the control of reason, and grave decisions should not occasionally be made, so obviously wrong as justly to be exposed to the ridicule of the mere sciolist. We need not wonder, therefore, that the etymologist, opposed by ignorance from without, and urged on by a heated imagination from within, should be looked on by multitudes as a learned trifler; and that it should be said of him as has been said of commentators on the Apocalypse,—that his subject either finds him mad or leaves him so.

But here it should be asked, Is this popular dislike or odium really deserved? Is it true that etymology is wholly a creature of fancy? or that there is so large an admixture of caprice and whim in its composition, as to place the study of it without the pale of rational pursuits? Let the subject be viewed more closely. No person acquainted with the English language, and who has even a moderate knowledge of the Latin, can entertain a doubt that many English words are of Roman origin. Not to insist here on such words as are the same in both languages, as *honor*, *labor*, *favor*, nor such as have been introduced into our language with only a slight change, as *felicity*, from *felicitas*; *eloquence*, from *eloquentia*; *music*, from *musica*; *regal*, from *regalis*; and innumerable others of the same kind; none, with the smallest qualifications for judging, would probably hesitate in admitting a relationship, more or less near, between *sit* and *sedeo*, *seal* and *sigillum*, *sect* and *seco*, *identical* and *idem*, &c. As little doubt is there,

with those who know any thing of the subject, that such words as *eclipse*, *ecstacy*, and *energy*, are from the Greek. If we refer to the French, the relation between that language and the English is at once manifest, there being many words in the latter, which are undeniably derived from the former. A similar connexion appears, from a comparison of many English words with corresponding words in the remaining dialects of the Celt and Goth. About the general fact, therefore, that words can be traced from one language to another, there is, and can be, no dispute. The only difference of opinion which exists, when the subject is fairly presented, respects particular words. The amount of the difficulty is, that different persons have come to different results in certain etymologies, and entertain different opinions as to the extent to which the science of etymology can be relied upon. But no principle is better established, or more universally admitted, than this,—that occasional disagreements as to the details of a science, form no valid objection to the science itself.

The question now presents itself, Are there any sure principles to guide the etymologist in his inquiries,—any rules by which he can distinguish what is certain from what is doubtful, and what is merely probable from what is conjectural or fanciful? On this point Dr Webster remarks, ‘The governing principles of etymology are, *first*, the identity of radical letters, or a coincidence of cognates, in different languages, no affinity being admissible, except among words whose primary consonants are articulations of the same organs, as B, F, M, P, V, and W; or as D, T, Th, and S; or as G, C hard, K, and Q; R, L, and D. Some exceptions to this rule must be admitted, but not without collateral evidence of the change, or some evidence that is too clear to be reasonably rejected. *Second.* Words in different languages are not to be considered as proceeding from the same radix, unless they have the same signification, or one closely allied, or naturally deducible from it. And on this point, much knowledge of the primary sense of words, and of the manner in which collateral senses have sprung from one radical idea, is necessary to secure the inquirer from mistakes.’

How far these rules are founded in truth, and are entitled to be considered ‘principles of etymology’ will perhaps appear from a cursory view of the manner in which diversities in language originate, and of the nature of these diversities.

themselves. If a tribe but little advanced in the arts of civilized life, should be divided, and thus become the stock from which new and distinct communities proceed, the language at first common to the whole body may be supposed to change very greatly in the course of a few ages, in some such manner as this. Those vowel-sounds, which are not very distinct, would be interchanged, as the *a* and the *e*, and the *o* and the *u*. The vowel-sounds would likewise be varied by interchanging *long* and *short*, *broad* and *flat*. Sounds also, which are represented by the consonants, would be soon varied. An aspirate might easily become more or less rough, be entirely omitted, or introduced where there was none before. Consonant-sounds of the same organ could hardly fail to be substituted for each other, as the sound of *d* and *t* dentals, of *b*, *f*, *m*, and *v*, labials, and the same of the letters of the other organs. If alphabetical writing be supposed to be now introduced, the primitive words as written in any one branch of the original community, would have little resemblance to the corresponding words in the other branches, partly from a change in the words as spoken, and partly from a difference which would exist in the application of the alphabet. Even where the alphabet is the same, and the sounds to be expressed the same, different persons will not agree in all cases in the selection of letters. But the alphabets themselves would vary; the same letter being used among the different tribes as a representative of a very different sound. The changes which are made in words by being written in alphabets where the powers of the letters are not the same, is exemplified in dictionaries of our own language for the use of foreigners. As our sounds are there expressed by a foreign alphabet, we are often hardly able to recognise our most intimate acquaintance. Thus, in a dictionary in which our pronunciation is given according to the sounds of the German letters, after the word *birth*, the author has put *berrdh*; after *queen*, *kwihn*; after *squeeze*, *skwihs*; after *judge*, *dschodsch*; and after *church*, *tschohctch*. Yet here it is the author's object to express the sound of the word exactly, and no doubt to a German ear he has accomplished his object.

But differences in words as written, would originate not only in the fact, that a difference of pronunciation had been brought about, and different powers assigned to the letters; but likewise from carelessness in spelling, or neglect of all analogy in some cases, and too close adherence to it in others. This dis-

regard of rule is often found in those who undertake to write English, and who are determined in the choice of letters by the ear only. Words, in these circumstances, are sometimes so written, that a pretty accurate analysis of sounds must be instituted, before it can be determined what the writer intended. Perhaps the English are more exposed to mistakes in this case, than most other people, from the great irregularity of their orthography. That this is not a gratuitous and unsupported theory, will appear from the induction of a few particulars.

Our language is largely derived from the Saxon. Many words, now used in English, are undeniably the same as are found in other languages, which, like our own, are of Teutonic origin. We will give a few examples of the changes in words, which have actually occurred. *Better* is in German *besser*; the letters *t* and *s*, which are pronounced by nearly the same organs, having been interchanged. The substitution of one *dental* for another occurs frequently in these languages. Thus we have *God*, *Gott*; *bread*, *brot*; *thank*, *dank*; *think*, *denken*; *thick*, *dick*; *thing*, *ding*; *this*, *dieser*; *thorn*, *dorn*; *throng*, *drang*; *thin*, *dünn*; *thirst*, *durst*; *dance*, *tantz*; *dear*, *theuer*; *door*, *thor*; *daughter*, *tochter*; *drink*, *trinken*; and so on, through the two vocabularies. If there was a single instance only of this species of change, it might be said, that it was the result of chance; but the examples being so numerous, and occurring everywhere in the two languages, there can be no reasonable doubt, that the corresponding words, here enumerated, were originally the same. We might now proceed to illustrate, by a like comparison, the interchange of letters of the other organs; but this is unnecessary. Perhaps, even now, an apology is due for the particularity in reference to this subject, we have indulged in. Those who are familiar with such inquiries will probably look upon our remarks as too elementary; we will add, therefore, on this point, merely, that changes take place in words, not only in single consonants and consonants of the same organ, but in several, and those of different kinds. Thus our word *deep* is in the German, *tief*; *dentals* being interchanged at the beginning, and *labials* at the end. Let a comparison also be made of *deaf*, *taub*; *deed*, *that*; *death*, *tod*; *washing*, *tushing*; *like*, *gleich*; *drive*, *treib*; *do*, *thun*; *to burn*, *verbrennen*; *to hold*, *verhatten*; *can*, *konnen*; *come*, *kommen*; *coal*, *kohle*; *day*, *tag*, and thus through the two languages, in a large proportion of the words.

From this exhibition it is manifest, that the cognate letters, as stated by Dr Webster, afford important aid to the etymologist; and that the first of the two 'governing principles' given above, has abundant support. It is admitted, that there is here sometimes room for mistake; resemblances may exist, which are merely accidental; but this circumstance authorizes no conclusion against the whole system. It shows only the necessity of cautious examination and comparison. We would here remark, that, in the examples given above to illustrate a single principle in etymology, references have been limited to modern languages, and to two which, we know historically, sprung from the same stock; as it is important towards satisfying all scruples, that the fact should be prominently exhibited, that, within comparatively a few centuries, a great diversity of dialect has come in among those who before used the same speech. Now, if, in modern languages, changes have arisen by a commutation of cognate letters, it is certainly no very rash inference, that similar changes were made in the languages of antiquity. If tribes, in modern Europe, when separated from each other, form different dialects of their original tongue, we may conclude it has been so in all countries and in every age. And if changes among the cognate letters are a safe rule to go by, in tracing a connexion among the modern languages of Europe, no valid objection lies against the same rule in tracing a connexion among the ancient languages of Europe and the East.

The principle of etymology, which we have been now considering, extends much farther than to single letters. It would be easy to show its application to syllables. Among the analogies which are discoverable between the words of two kindred languages, and which are important to the etymologist, we will notice a few, included perhaps in the rule just illustrated, and subordinate to it. Thus, the omission or addition of letters or syllables in words which have passed from one language to another, may have such uniformity, as to throw light on their derivation, and render etymologies, which might otherwise be doubtful, highly probable or certain. That the French *écume* is from the Latin *spuma* is rendered much more probable by observing that the letter *s*, with sometimes the consonant or consonants which follow it in the Latin, is often omitted, and in its place is substituted *e*, *ec*, &c. The Latin *scale* becomes, in this way, the French *échelle*; *schola*,

école ; *scribere*, *écrire* ; *scopulus*, *écueil* ; *scintilla*, *étincelle* ; *spina*, *épine*. The *s* is sometimes retained, as in *scapha*, *esquif* ; *spatium*, *espace*. We are now prepared to see other analogies, as *aperire*, *ouvrir* ; *operarius*, *ouvrier*, &c. The addition of a syllable also in French words derived from the Latin, is found in certain cases with such uniformity as not to obscure their origin. We have an example in the addition of *eil* or *il* to many nouns ; as *sol*, *soleil* ; *par*, *pareil* ; *acus*, *aguiille* ; *somnus*, *sommeil*, &c. The fact also that words are generally abridged in passing from the Latin to the French, throws light on particular etymologies. Thus, *ridere*, *rire* ; *manducare*, *manger* ; *ambulare*, *aller* ; *scribere*, *écrire* ; *pater*, *père*, &c. This contraction may sometimes be traced through several stages ; as *homo*, *homme*, *om* (old French), *on* ; *on dit*, in French, corresponding in meaning exactly to the *man sagt* of the German. Any one who has attended to those languages of modern Europe, which are extensively derived from the Latin, must have observed innumerable analogies of this kind, which, though scarcely noticed at first, yet, by their frequency become clear and undoubted. But it is unnecessary here to particularize farther.

As to the second principle or rule in etymology laid down by Dr Webster as quoted above, that 'words in different languages are not to be considered as proceeding from the same radix, unless they have the same signification, or one closely allied, or naturally deducible from it ;' some few remarks will be made by way of illustration. This rule likewise has a wide extent, and needs some qualifications. The rule applies especially to words which are the same in form, but differ wholly in signification ; as in the French words *pécher*, *to fish*, and *pécher*, *to sin*. The etymologist, who should attempt to bring these words together by tracing out some primary or collateral sense, however he might amuse his readers, would undoubtedly err. The first of these two words is evidently contracted, in the common mode of the French, from the Latin *piscari*, and the second from the Latin *peccare* ; though they are distinguished in French only by the accent. Now if words can be thus separated, which are in form so nearly alike, much more should we be on our guard against confounding those which have less resemblance. It is important here to know the history of each word ; and this brings us to the dividing line between certain and conjectural etymology. The highest

degree of proof is, where the successive variations in a word can be historically traced, and each of them referred to some well established analogy ; and the force of evidence is diminished, as we recede from this rule of rigid comparison.

We have now to ask the indulgence of those of our readers, who have followed us thus far, while we adduce several examples of words, to illustrate more fully the two rules of etymology which have been now considered, with several of their modifications, and the use of historical notices in relation to this species of research. We are not about to give a system of etymology ; but as far as we go, we choose to be understood ; and examples seem necessary for our purpose.

Recluse is defined by Dr Webster, ‘a person who lives in retirement or seclusion from intercourse with the world,’ &c. He says ‘it is derived from the Latin *recludo*, but with a signification directly opposite.’ How this change has occurred is obvious from looking at the history of the word. The prefix *re*, as is well known, is used in Latin, both in an *intensive* and a *negative* sense. It is probable, therefore, that the word *recludo* had not a fixed meaning. It is true, that in the writers of the Augustan age, there is no example remaining of the use of this word in any other sense, than the opposite of *claudio*. Hence in our common dictionaries, it is defined, ‘to open, to disclose,’ &c. But in the writers of the succeeding ages, examples are numerous of the use of *recludo*, where *re* has merely an intensive signification. Thus the historian Ammianus Marcellinus, in his account of the emperor Constantius, says, ‘Constantius, tanquam *recluso* Jani templo, stratisque hostibus cunctis, Romam visere gestiebat.’ This is the general meaning of the word in the Latin Fathers. *Reclusi* meant persons shut up ; hence, persons shut up in a monastery,—hence the French word *recluse*, from which our word is derived.

Stationery is defined to mean *paper, ink, quills, &c.* This is as remote from the meaning of that word in our language, which *stationery* most resembles, as *pécher, to sin*, from *pécher, to fish*. But it is undoubtedly the same word as *stationary, fixed*, and this appears from its history. Roman soldiers, who were placed in garrison, were denominated *stationarii* from *statio*, because they did their duty in one place. The word *stationarii* is used in this sense in the Roman Digest. In the later periods of the empire, persons were stationed at different places, on the great roads, to aid travellers

with horses and carriages in the transportation of their goods. These persons, as their duties were limited to particular districts, were likewise called *stationarii*, as may be seen in the code of the emperor Theodosius. A word already in use was here extended to include something analogous, a fact common in language. *Stationarii*, from being used to designate soldiers on garrison duty, and persons employed in particular districts to assist travellers, was applied to other classes of men, whose business confined them to one spot. Thus, on the revival of literature in Europe, shops were opened in the neighborhood of the universities, particularly at Padua, and Paris, where the universities were the most frequented; in which shops, books were kept for sale, and especially to *let*. In these places, also, numerous transcribers of books were employed, and conveniences of every kind were furnished to students for making extracts from authors,—a thing very necessary, as the art of printing was not yet discovered. These shops were emphatically denominated *stationes*, those who kept them were called *stationarii*, and the articles in which they dealt were designated by the law-Latin word *stationarium*, a word which seems to have been coined at this period. Hence, the word *stationery*, in due time, appeared in England. From the explanation of *stationer* in Todd's Johnson, it should seem, that it was first used to distinguish *stationary* from *itinerant* vendors of books. This, however, is disproved by the quotation given in the same place from Sheldon, where 'standing stationers' are mentioned. *Stationers* was a general term including both classes. The true origin of the word, it is believed, is given above. In French, the Roman *stationes* were called *postes*, a word derived from the Latin *positum*. Those who past as couriers from one *poste* or *statio* to another, were likewise called *postes*, which explains the double meaning of *post* in English.

Our word *squirrel* is from the Greek *σκιονγός*. This might be doubtful from simple inspection, but every step of the change from the one word to the other may be demonstrated. *Σκιονγός* is compounded of *σκιὰ*, a shadow, and *οὐρά*, a tail, and like most names in primitive languages, was, no doubt, used as descriptive of the animal designated. The Romans received the word into their language, by merely adapting it to their own orthography; it is therefore, in Latin, *sciurus*. In French it is *écureil*; *e* being prefixed, *s* omitted, and *il* added,

according to analogies explained above. In the old French the *s* is retained, and we there find *escureil*; and from this form of the word is our word *squirrel*. The *e* prefixed in French is often omitted in English; as Latin *status*, French *état*, English *state*; *stomachus*, *estomac*, *stomach*, &c.

Our word *bishop* and the French *évêque* have not a letter in common; yet they are both from the Greek *ἐπίσκοπος*. The Romans made no other change in the word than to give it the proper Latin termination. It is in their language, therefore, *episcopus*. The French by commuting the first *p* for its cognate *v*, and contracting the word, as is common with them, gave the word some such form as *evesc*. As words, which in Latin terminate in *c* with a vowel, are generally spelled with *que* in French, *evesc* would be written *evesque*, as it is in the old language. The *s* was afterwards omitted, probably because it was not noticed in pronunciation; and hence the word is now written *évêque*. There is a similar commutation of *p* and *v* in Italian; where the corresponding word is *vescovo*. Among the Saxons, *episcopus* was changed to *biscop*; *p* here being commuted for its cognate *b*. From *biscop*, by a very easy transition, is the English word *bishop*.

It is abundantly manifest from the etymologies now given, that the history of a word is often an important auxiliary in tracing its genealogy with correctness; and that the mere form is not in all cases sufficient. The historical *data*, necessary to produce conviction, may be more or less full. In languages nearly related, when a word falls within certain general analogies, it may be considered as well ascertained; but when the change is great, and the analogies slight, and especially in languages where but few words are known to be common, strict historical proof is indispensable. Where this is wanting, or the proof is weak, etymology is conjectural.

Perhaps no single etymology has been more frequently spoken of contemptuously, than that which Varro gives of the name of his own country, deriving *Italia* from *vitulus*, a *calf*. His account of the matter is this; ‘*Italia* a *vitulus*, ut scribit *Piso*.’ (*De Re Rust.* lib. ii. cap. 1.) And again, ‘*Bos*, in *pecuariâ*, *maximâ* debet esse *auctoritate*; *præsertim* in *Italiâ*, quæ a *bubus* *nomen habere* sit *existimata*. *Græciâ* enim *antiquâ*, ut scribit *Timæus*, *tauros* *vocabant* *ἴταλον*; a *quorum* *multitudine*, et *pulchritudine*, et *foetu* *vitulorum*, *Italianam* *dixerunt*.’ (Cap. 5.) Now, what is there objectionable in this ety-

mology? There is nothing, certainly, in the form of the words which forbids the supposition, that *Italia* has proceeded from *ἴταλός*. There is no interchange here even of cognate letters. Besides, it must be well known to any one, who has busied himself at all in Latin etymologies, that very many words employed by the Romans on the subject of the breeding of cattle, and on agriculture in its various departments, are of Greek descent. Thus we find, *aratrum*, *ager*, *bos*, *ovis*, *sus*, *agnus*, *mel*, *cera*, *olea*, *vinum*, all clearly Greek; and besides these many others, whose resemblance to the corresponding Greek words is less obvious, but still so apparent as to leave no doubt of the identity, to a great extent, of this part of the two vocabularies.

The plain inference from all this is, that the Greek colonists in Italy were an agricultural people; probably much farther advanced in the arts of civilized life, than the rude inhabitants of the country to which they came. They seem to have made a permanent impression on the character and social condition of those with whom they mingled; nor is it impossible, that a name given these foreigners, at first perhaps as herdsmen and agriculturists of superior skill, may have been ultimately changed to a designation of the country in which they had become conspicuous. Heyne, following Isidore, supposes that Italy was so called from *Italus*, one of its kings; and Niebuhr says this word is derived from *Itali*, the name of a tribe; neither of which opinions is inconsistent with the etymology reported by Varro. But the truth is, we are here in the region of conjecture; and without historical elucidations, which are now unattainable, it is impossible to come to any certain conclusion in this particular inquiry. As a conjecture, however, this etymology of Varro is certainly entitled to more respect than that of Béchard, who derives Italy from a Phœnician word signifying *pitch*.

This example may serve to illustrate what we mean by conjectural etymology. There may be conjecture where words consist of nearly the same letters. If *Italia*, from the mere resemblance of the words, and with slight circumstantial support, is allowed to have been derived from *ἴταλός*, it will be difficult to set bounds to the fancy in future speculations of the same kind. On these principles, we might soon be prepared to trace *cælibes* to *cælites*, though *b* and *t* are not cognates, especially when we are told by way of confirmation, that the former are included under one common notion or conception

with the latter, 'quod onere gravissimo vacent ;' and we might believe that *avarus* is from *avidus auri*, and *locuples* from *loculi pleni*, and so on without end.

In noticing a work of which etymology forms so conspicuous a part, it seemed necessary to premise some general observations, exhibiting an outline of our opinions, at least on the leading principles of this branch of philology. We are aware that what has been said is imperfect, and needs much farther illustration ; but our limits will allow no more, and few readers, perhaps, will have followed us thus far. We come, then, to the Dictionary.

The author, in a very elaborate Introduction, has first explained his views of the origin of language ; and from this topic has passed to another, which, if more within the limits of investigation, from fact and experience, is still involved in considerable obscurity ; that is, the affinity or relationship of languages to each other. The theory which he has adopted, to explain this very difficult part of his researches, is, that the languages of the East and West were originally the same ; and that all variations have arisen from the dispersion of tribes and wandering hordes into distant parts of the world. Many words of the primary stock he supposes still to exist, at least in the principal branches of what he styles the Japhetic and Shemitic families. To detect these common words, requires a very careful and accurate analysis. As the two great divisions of language, the Eastern and Western, exhibit much diversity in the inflections of words to express relation, time, and manner of existence, and in the mode of forming compounds and derivatives, the resemblance to be looked for must be in the *roots* consisting of the same or of cognate letters, and conveying the same ideas, or such as have an obvious affinity.

As, from the absence of almost all records of the early ages, an exact historical exhibition of the progressive changes of words is impracticable, the proof of identity in particular cases must consist chiefly in the number of resemblances which can be pointed out, and the extent of the analogies which can be ascertained. Lists of words supposed to be common to the European and Oriental languages, have been heretofore compiled, which show so many words in the two branches, alike in form and in signification, as to afford very plausible reasons to believe in their primitive identity, even without very extensive research. The longest catalogue of this kind, with which we

are acquainted, is that of Ogerius. Some words, indeed, which he brings together, seem to have been communicated at a later period, from one branch to the other, by means of war or commerce ; still there are resemblances in numerous words of common use and of primary necessity, which no occasional intercourse will explain.

In discussing this part of his subject, Dr Webster has gone into an extended examination of the particles of the ancient and modern languages of Europe and of Western Asia. Many of these particles he finds used separately, some in one language, and some in another, or as prefixes to nouns or verbs. Some are found in the same language both in a separate and in a compound state, with such changes in the letters as take place among cognates, or in the process of composition. In this part of the introduction, as well as in what he has said of the changes of consonants and vowels, the change or loss of radical letters, and the change of the signification of words, with the various incidental topics discussed, the author will bear an advantageous comparison with any one who has before gone over any part of the same ground, and whose writings are known to us. We are not acquainted with the writer on these subjects, who is more entirely original, who has relied more on his own investigations, and who has been less swayed by mere authority ; and we have seen no indications of a disposition to differ from others, from the mere love of singularity. If in a few instances he does not produce conviction, if some things appear to rest too much upon conjecture and accidental coincidences, and now and then a conclusion is hazarded, which will be adopted only by the deeply initiated,—let him who is dissatisfied turn to Vossius, Bochart, and other celebrated etymologists of modern days, and he will hesitate to complain. Quintilian could ask in defence of the writers on etymology in his time, ‘ *Cui non post Varronem sit venia?* ’ The same question will occur to such as will peruse the authors now alluded to ; and after even a moderate examination, they will hardly think it worth their while to talk much of fancy, whim, or conjecture, in the introduction to this dictionary.

Of this preliminary discourse it is impossible to give an intelligible abstract, without greatly exceeding the limits we have prescribed to ourselves in this review. We would add only, that we think the author has contributed somewhat to the previous probability, that the Hebrew triliteral roots are com-

pounds, and so far strengthened the theory, which is supported by plausible reasons, that the original language of mankind was monosyllabic. In this point of view, what he has said on the Hebrew word בָּדָל in its relations to certain words in other languages, to show that בָּ is a prefix, is deserving of peculiar notice. The striking coincidences of this word with others, we believe to have been here pointed out for the first time. This example needs only a few like it brought to its support, to be the foundation of important conclusions. That many of the trilateral Hebrew roots are compounds, appears probable likewise from their terminations; a circumstance to which Dr Webster, so far as we have noticed, does not allude. To understand what is here intimated, let the words חָרֵם *the sun*, חָרַה *to burn*, and חָרֵב *to be dry or dried up*, be compared; as likewise גָּלַה *to uncover*, גָּלָד *the skin*, גָּלַח *to shave*, and גָּלָב *a barber*, and other similar classes of words. If a conjecture may be here allowed, we would say, that as a connexion between the languages of Western and Eastern Asia, particularly the Shemitic and Sanscrit families, seems now to be admitted, among other elucidations to be looked for, as inquiries proceed, the subject of biliteral roots may come in for a share. But we have not space to enlarge here.

In the etymologies annexed to the several words in this dictionary, we find the comparison of languages carried to a much greater extent than in any preceding work of the kind, which has fallen under our observation. The author professes to have compared twenty languages, and to have found each language to throw light on every other. Of course, very considerable changes have been made from the etymologies of words as they stand in Johnson, even with the improvements of Mr Todd. Advantage has been properly taken of the investigations of Tooke, whose general system of tracing words to their roots has been adopted; though variations from Tooke occur in stating the origin of words, and occasionally in the details of following out the branches of the principal stocks. In noticing this part of the work, we can only produce a few examples of what the author has 'done; beginning with such etymologies as will give the most favorable view of his labors.

Address, taken in connexion with *Dress*, is accompanied with an etymology, which will serve as a specimen of a large class in this department. We have first the French *addresser*, from which, no doubt, the word came directly to the English.

Next follows the Spanish *enderezar*, the Italian *dirizzare*, and the Latin *dirigo*. It is added, that there is here a coincidence with words in the Chaldee, Arabic, and Syriac, which signify *to direct, to rectify, to fit*. Under the word *dress*, besides the French *dresser*, to make straight, to set up, to erect, the Armorican is given, *drecza, dreczein*; the Italian *rizzare*, to erect, to make straight; the Spanish *enderezar*, and Portuguese *endereçar*, to direct; the Norman *adrescer*, to redress. From this comparison, the inference is made, that the primary sense of the word is, *to make straight, to strain or stretch to straightness*. It is added, that the Italian *rizzare* is supposed to be formed from *ritto*, straight, upright; Latin, *erectus, rectus*, from *erigo, rego*. From the primary meaning of these words, as thus deduced, the various significations in which they are used are given.

This account of the word is more satisfactory than that in Todd's Johnson. The comparison of the corresponding words in other languages being more extended, and the primary sense, as it is called by the author, being more distinctly exhibited, the transition in the various uses of these words is more easily understood and remembered. There is, indeed, a prevalent opinion, that etymology generally is of little value in ascertaining the meaning of words. Their signification, it is said, must be settled by their use, and not by tracing their genealogy. But that a correct etymology of a word may be so employed as to render its definition more exact and clear, is obvious from the use which has been made of the very etymology now under consideration. From the primary sense of the word *dress*, to make straight, or reduce to straightness, as drawn from its etymology, the first meaning given is, to adjust to a straight line, as in the military phrase, '*dress your ranks*.' Hence the other senses of the word,—to put in order, to adjust; to prepare, *in a general sense*; to put the body in order; to put on rich garments, where *dress* is used emphatically; to dress up, &c. This arrangement of the several significations of a word shows their mutual dependence; the limits within which a word may be employed are more clearly defined, and the danger of its being perverted to express that for which it is not adapted, and for marking which there may be other words altogether appropriate, is much diminished.

This particular advantage, in attending to the etymology of

words, towards fixing their definitions, may be seen more distinctly, by turning to this same word *dress* in Todd's Johnson. Here the first meaning of the word is, *to clothe, to invest with clothing, &c.*, which, being a secondary signification, has little apparent connexion, as thus placed, except in form, with the French *dresser*, which is given as its etymon. Dr Webster has, therefore, very properly changed the order of the definitions. Mr Todd, however, under the word *dress*, has given the old Welch *trwsio*; and under *address*, the low Latin *addretiare* vel *addressare*, which are omitted by Dr Webster. The several significations of the word *address*, follow naturally from *dress*, as modified by the preposition *ad*. The primitive sense of this word is seen in the mercantile expression, 'to *address*, that is, to *direct* goods to the care of another, as agent or factor ;' a sense which we have found in this dictionary only.

We would here make a single remark as to the derivations from the Eastern languages. Most of this class of etymologies are, as here stated, mere *coincidences*. Of proper historical proof of the connexion between the Oriental and Occidental languages, we possess but little. The evidence that words in these two great divisions of language, or as Dr Webster denominates them, the Shemitic and Japhetic families, have a common origin, must arise from resemblance in form and in signification ; and especially in the number of words which will bear such comparison. We are inclined to believe, that to this part of the etymologies of the work under review, most exceptions will be taken. Not that we suppose such connexion unsusceptible of proof. The view of Oriental words in this dictionary is sufficient to evince, that the supposition of a community of roots, to a considerable extent, between the language of the East and of the West, has very plausible support. But the relation of the Eastern languages to our own is less manifest ; and as the progressive changes in the transition of words cannot here be distinctly marked, there is more room for conjecture, and, by necessary consequence, for mistake. These Oriental words are, we think, very properly inserted among the etymons. They will contribute to encourage inquiry in this branch of philology ; and if further investigation should show, that some are incorrectly classed, it will undoubtedly add confirmation to the assignment of others. It must be admitted, however, that any important advantage from these Eastern derivations, in the defining part of the

dictionary, can hardly be looked for. They may aid occasionally in detecting the original sense of a word, but such instances must be rare.

Array. Under this word, the etymology is much extended and improved ; and the definition is, in consequence, more lucid. The connexion suggested between this word and *ray*, *rod*, *root*, *radius*, &c. is ingenious. The whole is given as matter of opinion, and is deserving of consideration. Such intimations serve at least to direct inquiry. If they should prove erroneous, no harm is done.

Assay and *Essay*. The etymologies and definitions of these words give a favorable impression of the dictionary ; but it is difficult to abridge them.

Bird. The original meaning of this word is *chicken*, as stated likewise in Todd's Johnson. But the etymology is here carried farther. The remarkable fact is likewise noticed, that the proper generic name of flying animals, *fowl*, has been laid aside ; and the name of the young of those animals has been substituted for it. In Todd's Johnson it is said, 'In common talk, *fowl* is used for the larger, and *bird* for the smaller kind of feathered animals.' Yet among the authorities, we find quoted from Milton,

‘The *bird* of Jove stoop'd from his airy tour.’

The whole account of this word by Dr Webster, is more consistent and satisfactory.

We might proceed to notice particularly a long list of words which we have marked, in the etymologies of which there is much that is curious, much that throws new light on the origin of our vocabulary, on the connexion of different languages, and on the general or primary ideas under which words may be comprehended. Among these we have room only to refer to *beseech*, *brace*, *forest*, *foreign*, *hate*, *heat*, *seek*, and *suit*, which show very extensive research ; and where the lovers of etymological lore will find abundant materials for instruction and amusement. Under the word *feud*, we are told, that the word is not Teutonic or Gothic, as has been generally supposed, being found among none of the northern nations of Europe ; but that it originated in the south of Europe, probably among the Franks, or in Lombardy or Italy, and certainly among those who studied the civil law. The author, by tracing this word, in its several forms and significations, through the Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and

Norman-French, comes to the conclusion, that *feud*, as also *fee*, which is a contraction of it, is a word formed from the Latin *fides*, Italian *fede*, Spanish *fe*, Norman *fei*, signifying *faith*, *trust*, with *had*, signifying *state*, or *ead* or *odh*, signifying *estate*. A *feud*, therefore, is an estate in trust, or on condition. From the origin of this word, it is thought by the author, that the peculiar propriety is manifest, of calling the donee *fidelis*, and his obligation to his lord *fidelitas*, whence *fealty*. This account of the word *feud*, is, we believe, new, at least in part, and deserves particular attention.

Under the word *thing*, as connected with the name of the third day of the week, Tuesday, there is an etymology, which is, so far as we know, altogether original; and it is certainly ingenious and plausible. The primary sense of *thing*, by a long deduction through the northern dialects, is concluded to be, *that which comes, falls, or happens*, like *event* from the Latin *evenio*. *Dings-dag*, otherwise *Ding-dag*, in some of the dialects, signifies *Tuesday*, and this from the circumstance that that day of the week was, as it still is in some states, the day of opening courts; that is, *litigation-day*, or *suitors'-day*, a day of strife for justice; or perhaps *combat-day*, the day of trial by battle. This, in the view of the author, connects itself with another curious fact, that among our ancestors, *Tig* or *Tiig* was the name of the deity of combat and war, the Teutonic Mars; that is, strife, combat deified. This word was contracted into *tiw*, or *tu*, and hence *Tiwas-dæg*, or *Tuesday*, Tuesday, the day consecrated to *Tiig*, the god of war. It was natural that trials by battle should be assigned to this day; and hence, as other forms of litigation took their place, that Tuesday should be appropriately *litigation-day*. That *res*, in Latin, is connected in the same manner with *reus*, accused, as intimated by the author, seems more doubtful.

Though the etymologies in this dictionary show extensive and laborious research, and contain important improvements on the etymological works which have preceded it; and though they will often, perhaps generally, afford entire satisfaction to the inquirer; yet in some cases the evidence on which the author has founded his opinions, is not very obvious; and in running over a variety of articles, we have experienced all the states of mind from full credence in what we found, through the gradations of doubt, to entire disbelief. It is indeed stated in the advertisement to this dictionary, that the

etymological part is given to the world under great disadvantages. The brevity required in a dictionary, will not allow of the exhibition of all the facts, which have led to particular conclusions. It is with a full view of these difficulties, that we propose any objections to this part of the dictionary; and we are aware of the liability we are under to see the weakness of our criticisms exposed by the publication of the 'Synopsis,' which the author has in hand. Still, whether the doubts we shall suggest, have any just foundation or not, the author will have an opportunity of seeing what points need especial elucidation; and will have it in his power to make that portion of his labors which is still in manuscript, more complete, and less exposed to misapprehension or perversion. We shall now, as in noticing what we approved, or considered as supported by very plausible reasons, give, as specimens of their class, a few examples of etymologies which do not satisfy us; for in neither case do we make any pretensions of furnishing a full list. The first word we have selected with this view is

Copy. This word is referred, first, to the French *copie*, which, with the corresponding words in Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, is supposed to be from the Arabic, and to coincide with the root of *cope* and *cuff*. That *copy* came to us directly from the French *copie*, there can be no doubt; but that this latter word, and the Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese *copia*, are from the Latin *copia*, seems more probable. From the use of such phrases as *dare copiam*, *facere copiam*, *habere copiam*, with reference to *possession*, *permission*, *opportunity*, &c. the transition was not very abrupt to the meaning of our word *copy*. But whether this was the precise mode in which this word received a new signification, or not, it is certain that *copia* in low Latin, had sometimes the meaning of *exemplum*. *Copia*, with this latter meaning, passed into the French, and from the French to the English, and left its original signification behind. In the Italian and Spanish, *copia* has the two senses of *abundance*, and *copy* or a *transcript* from an original. We seem to have here the link which connects this word with the Latin, and that historical support which etymology so often needs. The intermediate steps between *cope*, *cuff*, and *copy*, are not obvious; or if this connexion is allowed, the question will arise, how the Italian and Spanish *copia*, acquired the meaning of *abundance*. We would, however, add, that in tracing the origin of *cope*, Dr Webster, in deriving it from the

northern languages of Europe, has evidently the advantage of Mr Todd, in his etymology of the same word. Whether *cope* has any connexion with the Arabic, and *cuff* with the Greek *κόπτω*, rests, we suppose, on conjecture, though the conjecture is ingenious.

Bladder. That this word has any other connexion with *blaze*, *blade*, &c. than what is accidental we do not at present see. The objection is not, that words used to designate things so diverse, are claimed to have come to us from the same *radix*, for, that such things may be, there is most abundant proof in language; but, that the coincidences in the northern languages, on which this common descent is predicated, seem to be fortuitous.

Father. That this word has any other relation to *fodder*, than that which has arisen from casual coincidence, in the present state of our knowledge, we do not see.

Key is derived, by the author, from the Saxon *coeg*. The tenth signification given this word, is 'a ledge or lay of rocks near the surface of the water.' *Key*, a ledge of rocks, is rather from the Spanish *cayos*, which has been gradually corrupted in pronunciation and orthography to *key*. The word *cayos* may be seen on Spanish charts. This is a striking example of the accidental resemblance of words originally distinct; and of the danger of relying too much on the fact, that words may be included under some general idea.

Queen seems to have no other connexion with *quean*, than that both names may sometimes be justly applied to the same individual. Of this kind of coincidence we have had a flagrant example in our times. We should rather think *quean* only to be from the Saxon *cwæn*, and *queen* to be from the German *koenigen*.

Romance. That the appropriate meaning of this word came from the use of the Roman or Romanish dialect by the Troubadours, who translated into it the wild and extravagant tales of the Moors and others, we supposed to rest on indubitable proof. The connexion between this word and the Welch *Rham* seems to want that historical illustration, of which we have before spoken. That Rome did not receive its name from Romulus and Remus, and that the history of these personages is fabulous, is probable enough; but for the proof of it we should rely little upon an etymology, which rather needs the support of history than furnishes history any elucidation.

We might proceed to enlarge the list of etymologies whose correctness we consider as doubtful, and likewise that of etymologies in which we generally concur; but there is little apparent advantage in this course. Our limits will not allow of many specifications; and the examples already produced, furnish abundant foundation for all the remarks we are disposed to add. The etymological part of this dictionary, then, shows evidence of great toil, extensive inquiry, and a very careful comparison of words. Words from many different languages are here brought side by side, which shed light upon each other, and an attentive consideration of which will suggest hints for still farther discoveries and improvements. We are inclined to believe, that so far as errors and mistakes exist in this part of the work, they will be found to have originated from the fact, that the similarity of words in their letters or cognates has sometimes been too much relied upon in settling their common descent; that occasionally too little allowance has been made for caprice or accident in the formation of words, and in the change of significations; and, in some cases, not improbably, from the fact, that the examination of a language has been confined to the vocabulary, without that intimate acquaintance with grammatical forms, and with phraseology, which is sometimes necessary for a full and accurate analysis. But in all the great divisions of knowledge, there are departments, in which speculation and conjecture are allowable; nor does any sufficient reason suggest itself, why, in etymology, similar indulgence should not be granted. We would add, that though there are many places in this work, where attention to the etymology of words, has enabled the author to improve his definitions; we have fallen upon no instance, where the etymology appeared doubtful, in which the definition appeared to be affected by the supposed error.

As to the extension of the vocabulary, we are informed, in the advertisement to the work, that, 'the dictionary of Walker has been found by actual enumeration, to contain, in round numbers, *thirty-eight thousand* words. Those of Johnson, Sheridan, Jones, and Perry, have not far from the same number. The American edition of Todd's Johnson contains *fifty-eight thousand*. In the work now submitted to the public, the number has been increased to *seventy thousand*.' Among the words added, it is stated, that there have been brought into the vocabulary, many words of common use, as important as any

in the language ; participles of verbs ; terms of frequent occurrence in historical works, especially those derived from proper names ; legal terms ; and terms in the arts and sciences.

There is room for some difference of opinion in respect to the range, which the lexicographer ought to take in forming his vocabulary. Some, no doubt, would prefer a dictionary, which should contain such words only as are of reputable use on subjects of common life, and general literature ; in which there should be no word really obsolete, no word which is not found in some author of established character, and no words properly scientific ; words of this latter class being assigned to a separate work. That a dictionary compiled on these principles, which should contain only the undoubted classical part of the language, supported by proper authorities, would be useful, is not denied ; but its circulation would be necessarily limited. Unusual words are in fact met with among authors of no mean name, and many readers wish them explained ; scientific words occur in books on common subjects, and their signification is not always known. A dictionary is of course in such cases referred to ; and that work will be preferred by most persons, which least frequently disappoints them. Hence it has long been the custom of lexicographers, to recommend their works by stating the number of words which they contain, and the variety of subjects to which the vocabulary extends. Thus Howell speaks of his dictionary as containing a 'longe nomenclature of the peculiar and proper terms belonging to several arts, to the most generous sort of recreations, to all professions both liberal and manual, from the engineer to the mouse-trap-maker, from the merchant-adventurer to the cryer of matches. Here you have the terms of heraldry, of horsemanship, of hunting, of hawking, of war, the terms of chemistry, of architecture, of navigation, not a cable or a rope in a ship but you have it here ; you shall find here all the knighthoods and religious orders of christendom, with fifty several distinct sections, a work most useful for all that pretend to knowledge, curiosity, and true eloquence, &c.' Whatever may be thought of a dictionary containing only select words, a copious vocabulary has, in some respects, the advantage, and will be sought for by the greatest number of readers.

Of the words which have been added among the several classes mentioned above, it is impossible within our limits to give many specimens. We shall restrict ourselves here to a

few cited by the author himself. Among words in common use, he has enumerated as examples the following. Nouns—*grandjury*, *grandjuror*, *eulogist*, *consignee*, *consigner*, *mammoth*, *maltreatment*, *iceberg*, *parachute*, *malpractice*, *fracas*, *entailment*, *perfectibility*, *glacier*, *firewarden*, *safety-valve*, *savings-bank*. Adjectives—*gaseous*, *lithographic*, *peninsular*, *repealable*, *retaliatory*, *dyspeptic*, *missionary*, *nervine*, *meteoric*, *mineralogical*, *reimbursable*. Verbs—to *quarantine*, *revolutionize*, *retort* (v. i.), *patent*, *explode* (v. i.), *electioneer*, *re-organize*, *oxidize*, *magnetize*. Many hundred words of this kind are stated to have been added. They are to be found on every page of the dictionary, and it would be superfluous to cite many as specimens. Few objections, probably, will be urged against these additions. Such words as have been introduced into the language, to mark what is novel in the situation and institutions of the United States, are in the strict sense, necessary, and are adopted by the English themselves in speaking of our concerns. They cannot do otherwise, if they would be understood. Thus *land-office* and *land-warrant* are as necessary and as legitimate words, as *savings-bank* and *power-loom*, the two former of which originated with us, and the two latter with the English.

That some few words in the 'American Dictionary' will be thought not sufficiently authorized, is not improbable. *Lengthy* may be pronounced not English; but the author has given his authorities, and it must rest upon those. Without undertaking to defend this word, we would say, that it may be seen much more frequently in English, than in American, publications. A number of a periodical work* of high literary pretensions, published in London during the last year, is now before us, in which we find the following sentence. 'Mr Scott appears to have searched the road-books with exemplary diligence, in many instances transcribing several consecutive pages from Robertson, in others, translating *lengthy* paragraphs from Seckendorf and Sleidan, &c.' In a language so anomalous as the English no valid objection lies against *lengthy* from the manner of its formation; but, if it is attended with vulgar associations, this may be a reason for not using it. In this respect, however, it is in the same predicament with other words,

* The British Critic, Quarterly Theological Review, and Ecclesiastical Record; No. 5, p. 65.

whose claim to a place in our vocabulary has never been questioned.

As to new words, whoever will compare the productions of the American, with those of the English press, and especially of the periodical press, will soon be satisfied that much more attention is paid to the authority of good writers, and to the decision of lexicographers, in the United States, than in England. We will take only the two last numbers of the London Quarterly Review (seventy-five and seventy-six), for illustration. Words are here employed, in great numbers, which are in no dictionary, or in the 'American Dictionary' only. We will give a list of a few.

Abrahamitical, in the phrase, 'an Abrahamitical family,' is found in none of the dictionaries. The astronomical tables of Alphonso, king of Arragon, are referred to as the *Alphonsine* tables. This adjective is not in Todd, but is supplied by Webster. Then follow, *absenteeism*, *beflattered*, *buccaneered*, *cacodemon*, *chief-justiceship*, *choric*, *cognizant*, in the sentence 'a bar intent upon the subject, and scarcely less *cognizant* of all its bearings, than the judge himself,'—*concessionist*, a new word which has originated from the Catholic question,—*consubstantially*, *coxcombry*, *demented*, *devilets*, a diminutive of *devil*, though we had already in the dictionaries the nouns *deviling*, and *devilkin*,—*dupery*, *emancipationist*, another new word from the controversy about Catholic claims,—*faithworthiness*, *filiated*, in the sentence, 'a fine of two thousand pounds of sugar was exacted from any person, upon whom a mulatto child should be *filiated*',—*fire-maker*, *finger-post*, *fruit-garden*, *game-laws*, *governor-general*, *grindingly*, *hierocracy*, *huge-limbed*, *hymn-writing*, *ill-advised*, *ill-augury*, *ill-lodging*, *ill-placed*, *ill-planned*, *ill-requited*, *ill-suited*, *ill-treatment*, *ill-timed*, *ill-wounded*, *intervisit*, *koffila*, *law-office*, *law-officer*, *land-crab*, *land-owners*, *life-interest*, *life-owners*, *long-established*, *long-backed*, *maherrie*, *metapolitics*, *mispolicy*, *mother-government*, *mud-built*, *mud-cabin*, *mystify*, *neologism*, in Todd and Webster, but not in the sense in which it is here used,—*new-found*, *non-interference*, *non-existent*, *over-drawing*,* as 'over-drawing a metaphor,'—*partisanship*,—*perilled*, as an active verb,—*personality*, *pheasant-covers*,

* Quære—whether *over-drawing*, as used in the business of banking, is not entitled to a place, at least in an American dictionary.

public-house, power-loom, qualified, as a neuter verb ; *rabbit-trained, recitation-room, recriminative, relet, sea-rover, self-application, self-identification, seminude, sensualization, shillelah, socializing, statesboys, sub-commission, sheik, theopathic, unamalgamated, unapostolic, undegenerate, ungentlemanliness, unobtruding, &c. &c.* are in none of the dictionaries. We find, likewise, in the same numbers of this Review, *agitator*, for one who excites sedition or revolt, a word used in the time of the Commonwealth, and now current in all discussions of Irish affairs,—*autocratic, international, inappropriate, mansion-house, nebula, rabbinism, redemptioners*, which the reviewer calls a ‘barbarous appellation,’ but he could evidently find no substitute except in a periphrasis,—*ricketty*, in the sense of weak, feeble, *shirkings*, or, as Dr Webster spells the word, *sharkings, steam-vessel, unscrupulous, undercurrent, and unilateral*, which are in the dictionary of Webster only. This is not given as a complete list. It is made up of such words only as were selected in rapid reading. The periodical press of Great Britain is actually running riot in language. We have nothing like this in the United States. More new words, it is believed, have been brought into use in England within comparatively a few years, most of which are wholly unnecessary, than in this country, with all its new institutions, from the time of its first settlement. Dr Webster should not be reproached for not picking them all up. They are as thick as Claudian’s ghosts ;

‘quantas truculentior Auster
Decutit arboribus frondes.’

He has added very greatly to the number of compound words, the compounds of *un, sub*, &c. On the compounds of *ill*, he remarks, that this word may be prefixed to almost any participle. That he should have omitted some few words of sufficient authority is not to be wondered at. We were somewhat surprised, we confess, in not finding the word *forever* in this dictionary ; it so often occurs as a single word, that we should suppose it would have forced itself upon the attention of a lexicographer, who had been twenty years over his work. But the ‘American Dictionary’ is not singular in this respect ; we can find the word in no other dictionary within our reach.*

* On further examination we find Dr Webster has defined *forever* under *ever*, but not *in loco*.

We now pass to consider this work as a *defining* dictionary ; and it is in this view chiefly, that a work of this kind is either interesting or valuable to the public at large. Etymological inquiries may instruct and amuse the few, who have leisure and ability to pursue them ; but to the great mass of readers a dictionary is useful only as it furnishes a copious vocabulary, and is a safe guide to the purity and precision of their mother-tongue.

In examining Dr Webster's labors in this department of his work, it will be natural to consider, in the first place, the *new significations* which he has introduced in his definitions. These occur on every page ; and amount, as he informs us, to between thirty and forty thousand. As far as we have been able to examine them, they consist, to a great extent, of the most common and important senses of words, according to the best usage of the present day. Thus, the sense of *achievement* for the *action* performed, *donation* for the *thing* given, *excitement* for the *effect* produced, *celebrity* for *renown* or *distinction*, a *premium* for a *reward* or *prize*, *magistracy* for the *body* of magistrates, *orientalist* for an *oriental scholar*, *gazetteteer* for a *dictionary of geography*, *muscular* for *strong*, an *acceptance* for a *draft* accepted, an *action* for a *military engagement*, a *manifest* for one of the *papers* of a *ship*, *anchorage* for the *place* where a ship may *anchor*, the *marine* of a country for its *navy*, *tact* for nice *discernment* or *taste*, *calculated* for *fitted*, *failure* to denote *insolvency*, *original* and *originality* to denote *mental* qualities, *speculate* and *speculation* in the *mercantile* sense of those terms, are examples of the additions in this part of the work, and are to be found, we believe, in no other English dictionary.

So likewise, the peculiar significations of the words, which are *italicized* in the following expressions, have been given, we believe, for the first time in a dictionary, by Dr Webster. The *docket* of a court, an *organ* of conveyance, to *invest* capital, to *protest* a draft, to *libel* a ship, the *locality* of a mineral, the *investment* of a fortress, *moral* certainty, the *execution* of a deed, a *lucid* arrangement, the *lock* of a canal, *menial* offices, to *address* a letter, to *adopt* an opinion, to *affirm* the decision of an inferior court, the *album* of a friend, the *alcove* of a library, a *cordon* of troops, *minute* investigation, *minuteness* of inquiry, the *validity* of a will, &c. It is useless, however, to multiply examples of this kind, since they occur on almost every page.

The number of definitions is also increased by a distinction between the senses of qualifying terms, when applied to *persons* and to *things*. Thus, Dr Johnson's definition of *learned*, 'versed in science and literature,' does not apply to a 'learned treatise.' In the expressions, 'a *charitable* man,' and 'a *charitable* society,' 'the *pious* donor,' and 'a donation for *pious* uses,' there are two distinct applications of the terms used, which we have seen marked by no one but Dr Webster.

The definitions in this work are rendered still more numerous and valuable, by the addition of important *technical* and *professional* senses, which belong to a large class of words or phrases. Thus, we find explained the meaning of a bill of exchange, course of exchange, balance of trade, bill of sale, bill of entry, bill of rights, animal magnetism, excommunication the greater and less, benefit of clergy, duplicate ratio, compound and double affinity, together with the legal sense of an affray, challenge of jurors, writ of error, bail common and special, bond, judge advocate, forgery, bill of exceptions, &c. These additions are very numerous, and present a great variety of useful information.

Besides increasing the number of his definitions, Dr Webster seems to have aimed, in the second place, at an increased fulness in describing the object or action in view. Thus, under the word *bishop*, after defining the term, he adds a statement of the mode in which bishops are elected and consecrated to office, both in England and in this country. Under the word *earth*, he enumerates the primitive earths, refers to their metallic bases as discovered by modern chemistry, and he likewise describes the orbit, figure, diameter, and revolution of our globe. Under the word *blockade*, he states in what cases a port may be considered as truly blockaded. In this respect, the work before us presents not merely the signification of words in their popular import, but, to a certain extent, a scientific enumeration of the properties and relations of the thing described. As examples of Dr Webster's mode of defining, compared in this respect with Dr Johnson's, we give the following.

Telescope. Johnson.—'A long glass by which distant objects are viewed.' Webster.—'An optical instrument employed in viewing distant objects, as the heavenly bodies. It assists the eye chiefly in two ways; first, by enlarging the visual angle under which a distant object is seen, and thus magnifying that

object ; and, secondly, by collecting and conveying to the eye a larger beam of light than would enter the naked organ, and thus rendering objects distinct and visible, which would otherwise be indistinct and invisible. Its essential parts are the *object-glass*, which collects the beam of light and forms an image of the object, and the *eye-glass*, which is a microscope by which the image is magnified.'

Pursuing the same course in *Natural History*, Dr Webster defines the most important terms by a specification of the properties of the objects which these terms designate, and the less important, by referring the several objects to their respective *genera*. It is unnecessary here to quote examples. In *Chemistry*, *Mineralogy*, and *Geology*, Dr Webster has added a great number of words to his vocabulary, and has conformed his definitions to the existing state of knowledge on these subjects. In these and other departments of science, the definitions, he informs us, have been submitted to professional gentlemen, whose character is a pledge for the correctness of the statements made. We would remark, however, that the space allotted to different articles in these departments, is not in every instance proportioned to what appears to us to be their relative importance. *Historical terms* have been added, to a great extent, in this work, and their definitions are in general given with a fulness, which will preclude the necessity of a reference to other works for the true meaning of such words. Where this exact information in the different branches of knowledge can be given within the space allowable in a dictionary, it is desirable, and adds to the value of the work.

Dr Webster, in the third place, has aimed at a more nice and accurate *discrimination* as to the signification of the terms defined. The leading and important words are not defined by *synonymes*, which serve only to confuse the mind, but by a brief enumeration of the properties which belong to the object in question. Thus,

Frugality is defined by Johnson to be equivalent to 'thrift' or 'parsimony'; by Webster, to be 'that careful management of money or goods, which expends nothing unnecessarily, and applies what is used to a profitable purpose; that use in which nothing is wasted. It is not equivalent to *parsimony*, the latter being an excess of frugality and a fault. *Frugality* is always a virtue. Nor is it synonymous with *thrift* in its proper sense; for *thrift* is the *effect* of frugality.'

Admiration is defined by Johnson to be ‘wonder, the act of admiring or wondering.’ By Webster, to be ‘wonder mingled with pleasing emotions, as approbation, esteem, love, or veneration; a compound emotion excited by something novel, rare, great, or excellent; applied to persons and their works. It often includes a slight degree of surprise. Thus we view the solar system with *admiration*.’

Magnanimity is defined by Johnson to be ‘greatness of mind; bravery, elevation of soul.’ By Webster, to be ‘that elevation or dignity of soul, which encounters danger and trouble with tranquillity and firmness, which raises the possessor above revenge, and makes him delight in acts of benevolence, which makes him disdain injustice and meanness, and prompts him to sacrifice personal ease, interest, and safety, for the accomplishment of useful and noble objects.’

Obstinacy is defined by Johnson to be ‘stubbornness, contumacy, pertinacy, persistency.’ By Webster, to be ‘a fixedness in opinion or resolution, that cannot be shaken at all, or not without great difficulty; firm and usually unreasonable adherence to an opinion, purpose, or system; a fixedness that will not yield to persuasion, argument, or other means. *Obstinacy* may not always convey the idea of unreasonable or unjustifiable firmness; as when we say, soldiers fight with *obstinacy*. But often, and perhaps usually, the word denotes a fixedness of resolution, which is not to be vindicated under the circumstances.’

Adjournment is defined by Johnson to be ‘an assignment of a day, or a putting off till another day; delay, procrastination, dismission to a future time.’ By Webster, to be ‘the putting off to another day or time specified, or *without day*; that is, the closing of a session of a public or official body.’ And likewise, ‘the time or interval during which a public body defers business; as, during an *adjournment*. But a suspension of business between the forming of a house and an adjournment, for refreshment, is called a *recess*. In Great Britain, the close of a *session* of parliament is called a *prorogation*; as the close of a parliament is a *dissolution*. But in Great Britain, as well as in the United States, *adjournment* is now used for an intermission of business, for any indefinite time; as an *adjournment* of parliament for six weeks.’

Acumen is defined by Johnson to be, in general, ‘quickness of intellect.’ By Webster, to be ‘a quickness of *perception*, the faculty of nice *discrimination*.’

Acquire is defined by Johnson, ‘to gain by *one's own* labor or power; to obtain what is not received from nature, or transmitted by inheritance.’ By Webster, ‘to gain by *any means*, something which is in a degree *permanent*, or which becomes vested or inherent in the possessor; as to *acquire* a title, estate, learning, habits, skill, dominion, &c. Plants *acquire* a green color from the solar rays. A mere temporary possession is not expressed by *acquire*, but by *gain, obtain, procure*; as to *obtain* (not *acquire*) a book on loan.’

Obtain is defined by Johnson, ‘to gain, to acquire, to procure.’ To *receive* is defined by him, ‘to take or obtain any thing.’ By Webster these words are thus distinguished, under the word *obtain*. ‘This word usually implies *exertion* to get possession, and in this it differs from *receive*, which may or may not imply exertion. It differs from *acquire*, as genus from species; *acquire* being properly applied only to things permanently possessed; but *obtain* is applied both to things of temporary and of permanent possession. We *obtain* loans of money on application; we *obtain* answers to letters; we *obtain* spirit from liquors by distillation, and salt by evaporation. We *obtain* by seeking; we often *receive* without seeking. We *acquire* or *obtain* a good title to lands by deed, or by a judgment of court; but we do not *acquire* spirit by distillation; nor do we *acquire* an answer to a letter or an application.’

Besides discriminating the signification of words with greater exactness, Dr Webster has corrected numerous errors into which Dr Johnson had fallen, through inadvertency, or a want of accurate information. The following may serve as examples of a large number, which we had marked as belonging to this class.

Peculation. Johnson—‘Robbery of the public; theft of public money.’ Webster—‘The crime of defrauding the public by appropriating to one's own use the money or goods *entrusted* to one's care for management or disbursement.’

Lens. Johnson—‘A glass, spherically convex on both sides.’ Lenses are not only convex, but concave, plano-convex, &c. The proper correction is made by Webster.

Lemma. Johnson—‘A proposition assumed.’ Webster—‘A proposition demonstrated for the purpose of being used in the demonstration of some other proposition.’

Coral. Johnson—‘A plant of a stony nature.’ This is corrected by Webster.

Focus. Johnson—‘The place where rays meet after refraction.’ Webster—‘after being reflected or refracted.’

Flame. Johnson—‘Light emitted from fire.’ It is more than light; it is ‘burning vapor,’ as defined by Webster.

Earn. Johnson—‘To gain as the reward or wages of labor, or any performance.’ But a man may *earn* money, who never *gains* it. To earn, is ‘to merit by service,’ according to Webster.

In the definitions of legal terms especially, Dr Johnson has fallen into many errors, which Dr Webster’s professional knowledge has enabled him to correct. Thus *larceny* is defined by Johnson to be ‘a petty theft.’ It is shown by Dr Webster to be a generic term, including all kinds of theft, and even burglary and robbery, and is distinguished by him into various classes, as *petty* and *grand* larceny, *simple* and *mixed* larceny.

Burglary and **house-breaking** are confounded by Dr Johnson. Burglary is defined by Dr Webster to be the crime of house-breaking, when committed in the night.

Robbery. Johnson—‘Theft perpetrated by force or with privacy.’ ‘**Robbery**,’ says Dr Webster, ‘differs from *theft*, as it is a violent felonious taking from the person or presence of another, whereas *theft* is a felonious taking of goods privately, &c. These words should not be confounded.’

That Dr Webster has added all the proper senses of words omitted by his predecessors, or corrected all their mistakes, is not to be supposed. We had marked what appeared to us in some places mistakes of his own; but it is unnecessary to insert them. He observes very justly, that ‘the defining part of a dictionary, embracing, as it does, the whole circle of ideas embodied in the language of a people, the utmost efforts of the lexicographer are only an approximation towards the end in view. No single mind can enter, with perfect exactness, into all the multiplied distinctions of thought and action, among a highly civilized people. For his information on many subjects, the author of a dictionary must rely on the statements of others; and he is liable to be misled, either by a want of accuracy in these statements, or by an erroneous conception of their meaning.’ A lexicographer is therefore entitled to much indulgence.

Many of the authorities of Johnson have been properly omitted, and space has been left for new matter; but we have sometimes wished for an authority for a new sense, where

none is given. We hope the author will devote his attention hereafter to improving this part of his work. From his extensive and minute acquaintance with the standard authors of English literature, he can easily find authorities for insertion, where he now has none; authorities, also, which may be advantageously substituted for some which he now has; and may detect senses of words which have hitherto escaped his notice. This is mentioned the more particularly, as it is here that English lexicography has been quite as deficient as in etymology, or in the number of words. In this department the English themselves have accomplished little since the time of Johnson; which may well excite surprise, considering the character of the nation. Dr Webster has done much; we hope he will be encouraged to do still more.

The next subject we would notice is *orthography*; which, in our language, is extremely irregular, and has long been, and will probably long continue to be, the opprobrium of English philology. The great difference between our spelling and pronunciation, is an evil of no ordinary magnitude, and is, indeed, the principal obstacle to the general diffusion through Europe of the English language and literature. Accustomed, as we are from childhood, to associate certain combinations of letters with certain words as pronounced, the eye and the ear, by time and use, are so far reconciled, that the excessive discordance between our written and spoken language is not perceived. To a foreigner, however, who is endeavoring to familiarize himself with English, and to one especially, who has been accustomed in his own speech to see the spelling of words settled by a few general rules, our orthography appears an inextricable maze, and to be characterized by the most glaring absurdities. 'Si un Anglois,' says Rousseau, 'lit à haute voix, et qu'un étranger jette les yeux sur le livre, l'étranger n'apperçoit aucun rapport entre ce qu'il voit et ce qu'il entend. Pourquoi cela? parce que, l'Angleterre ayant été successivement conquise par divers peuples, les mots se sont toujours écrits le même, tandis que la manière de les prononcer a souvent changé.* This appears to be a just account of the fact, and a true explanation of it.

To go back no farther than the Norman conquest, it is well known, that the language and literature of the Saxons were

* *Essai sur l'Origine des Langues*, ch. vii.

odious to William and his Norman followers; and as a means of rendering his dominion more complete and lasting, the conqueror established the French as the language of the court, of the halls of justice, and, where the Latin was not used, of the schools. The native inhabitants, however, adhered with surprising firmness, not to say obstinacy, to their mother-tongue. As the Norman-French and the Anglo-Saxon gradually united, and books began to be published in this new dialect, the orthography of words was regulated partly by the ear and partly by authority. But in accommodating the spelling to the pronunciation, the French sounds of the letters were sometimes used, and sometimes the sounds peculiar to the Saxon alphabet. In this confusion of alphabets, rendered still greater by provincialisms, both in language and pronunciation, our present very irregular, and in many respects absurd, orthography originated. One object in the early writers of English is abundantly manifest; they aimed at having, at least, letters enough in their spelling; and through fear, as it should seem, of omitting some which might have claims to be used, they often foisted into their words mere supernumeraries. Thus, after the language, as to words and construction, became in a good measure fixed, it was greatly overcharged, and actually borne down under the weight of its orthography. It may be useful to introduce here as specimens, a few words from Sir Walter Raleigh. *Hee, wee, doe, sonne, farre, finde, conveigh, moderatour, kindes, basenesse, evill, easie, naturall, downe, &c.* This is the spelling of one of the most correct as well as most elegant writers of the reign of James the First.

The excrescences, which so encumber these words, were gradually lopped off; so that in the history of Clarendon, the improvements in spelling strike us as great. This author wrote most of his words as they are still written; but we find *perswaded, suddain, frolique, alarum, &c.*; which orthography, in the late edition of his works, has been altered. He wrote *error* without the *u*, and *scepter*, though we find *lustre*. He reduced *publicke* to *publick*, &c. Dryden was irregular in his orthography; but he threw off some of the lumber of his predecessors, which, in a few instances, has been laid upon him again by his editor, Malone. But there is no advantage in dwelling longer on the history of these changes.

As to the variations in orthography proposed and adopted by Dr Webster, we shall say but little. We see no possible

use in retaining the *u* in the few words which are still extensively written with the termination *our*, as *honour*, *favour*, &c. If the reason for retaining the *u* in these words is, that this letter is in the French words *honneur* and *faveur*, the *u* is likewise in many other French words, and is dropped very generally in the corresponding words in English; as *auteur*, *inférieur*, are seldom now seen written in our language *authour*, *inferior*. Besides, what use is there in retaining the French *u* in words of this class? Or if words, which come to us through the French, are to be accommodated to French orthography, why is it that those who write *honour*, write also *honourable*? when the French write *honorable*, wisely varying their spelling to suit their pronunciation.

As to retaining the letter *k* at the end of many words, where it is still often placed; we see no objection to Dr Webster's rule, to retain the *k* in such words only as have sometimes a syllable added, beginning with *e* or *i*. The reason here is plain; the *k* preserves the pronunciation. But why should any one write *publick*, when no one writes *publickation*? The *k* in this case, is necessary neither to the pronunciation of the word, nor as a guide to its etymology. To take another example of a single word; we know of no good reason for writing *connexion* with an *x*; as it is an anomaly, which has been excluded from writings of the highest authority. Thus Gibbon, and Fox, in his life of James the Second, write this word analogically, *connection*.

In some other cases of proposed emendation, we are more doubtful. Dr Webster, following Milton, prefers *highth*; and the translators of Niebuhr's history of Rome, which was published in London during the last year, have the same spelling of this word. The same translators write *sovran* and *sovrainty*; and Dr Webster proposes *sovran*, and *sovrainty*; though he gives likewise the common orthography of these words. We have no space to enter upon a full consideration of this subject. No one now doubts that the substitution of *ai* for *oi* in many cases, in French orthography, has been for the advantage of that language; and in Spanish orthography, where, in comparison with our language, improvement was scarcely needed, some slight changes have been made for the better. The great objections to changes in spelling lie in the eye; we have been accustomed to see the word *worshipping* with a double *p*, and *worshiping* appears strange, and perhaps odious. But a *p*

might be here as easily spared as an *e* in *kindes*, or an *l* in *evill*, and an important analogy of the language would be preserved. Sir Walter Raleigh wrote *conveigh*, but to us *convey* appears better; we write *inveigh*, and *invey* is displeasing. So entirely does this feeling depend on association, that we see no ground for believing, if the chief anomalies in this part of our language were removed, that the next generation would not look upon our present method of spelling with the same wonder, and the same self-congratulation on their relief, as we now view that of the time of Elizabeth and James the First; and that they would not find as much difficulty in reconciling our boasted improvements in other respects, with our abuse of the alphabet, as we experience in conceiving of the accomplishments of Sir Philip Sidney, in union with the barbarous orthography of the 'Arcadia.' As little inconvenience, likewise, would probably be then felt from the change, as we now suffer from the changes of the last two centuries.

We do not say that we are now ready for any extensive alteration in our spelling. Our only object in what we have written on this topic, is to show that there are great evils in our present system, and that Dr Webster is not of course to be condemned, because he has ventured here to suggest what he considers as improvements. That there are difficulties on the other side, and such as are truly formidable, is not denied; but these we cannot now discuss. If we look back a quarter of a century only, we shall be convinced that there has been a progress in public opinion, as well as in the practice of writers, in respect to orthography; that the tendency is plainly towards analogy, and that, sooner or later, a reform will be achieved. That this may be accompanied with the least inconvenience, it is important that the object should be often and fully contemplated, in all its bearings; and especially, if permanency is ever to be looked for, that, in the language of the author, '*principles* should be substituted for the authority of *names*'.

On the subject of *pronunciation* we shall not enter; because we have already exceeded our intended limits. A separate article would be necessary for a proper discussion of that topic. Dr Webster maintains, that any attempt to indicate by characters the exact sound of vowels in our unaccented syllables, is calculated, in most cases, to mislead the speaker. From the rapidity of these sounds, they are to a certain degree

indefinite ; and he who should pronounce the *y* in *duty* precisely like *e* in *me*, or the final syllable of *affectionate* like the word *fate*, as marked in most of our dictionaries, would be thought affected, and would totally misconceive the exact sound intended by the notation. The author prefers, therefore, to leave such sounds to be caught by the ear, and conceives that our pronunciation has been vitiated, in many instances, by too great minuteness in marking them.

In *accentuation* we have noticed comparatively few peculiarities of our author. He inclines, with Johnson, to throw the accent back towards the commencement of the word ; and therefore favors the pronunciation of *com'pensate*, *dem'onstrate*, &c. as very commonly heard in this country. Some alterations in this kind of words of direct classical origin, we imagine will not prevail ; for example, *hor'izon*, *dec'ollate*. In various instances, Dr Webster gives both modes of pronouncing, as he does of spelling ; and this plan, we think, should be carried to a greater extent in a future edition. No two English dictionaries agree in pronunciation. Dr Webster differs from them in some cases, but not perhaps more frequently than they do from each other ; and as to the rule of usage, the diversity of pronunciation in England is greater than in this country.

Before closing our remarks, we would add a few words on the English Grammar appended to the Introduction to the dictionary. This grammar is, with few alterations, the same as that first published by the author in the year 1807. The changes which he introduced into the grammatical nomenclature, and a few other peculiarities, created a strong feeling of opposition to the whole work on its first appearance, and prevented its merits from being generally known, and duly appreciated. The necessity for all the changes which were made, was not apparent. Some of the new terms were thought to require as much explanation as those whose place they had taken. Besides, most of the names of the parts of speech in the old system, are appropriated exclusively to the subject of grammar ; whereas the new names, in some cases, are used in other senses, which contributes nothing to perspicuity.

As to the grammar in other respects, whoever will examine it attentively, will find many improvements on all those which preceded it. This is especially true of the syntax, which contains numerous remarks on the idioms of the language, which are highly important and valuable ; and which are to be found

nowhere else, except as they have been taken from this work. In no English grammar with which we are acquainted, is there so full and clear an exhibition of the several forms of the verb, as in this, or in such grammars as have borrowed from it. But with these general commendations of this grammar, as exhibiting a very careful examination of the language in the best writers, and great discrimination in distinguishing principles which have been too often confounded, we must dissent from some of the opinions which hold a prominent place in the work, and which the author has defended with his accustomed ingenuity. Of these we can now notice one only.

In the syntax of the grammar, as originally published, the use of the tense which the author denominates, and we think correctly, the *past-indefinite*, is objected to in certain cases, as used by our best authors. The remarks on this subject may now be found in the introduction to the dictionary. The use of the verb which is condemned, is that which is exemplified in a passage from the common version of the New Testament, Luke xvi, 31. 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one *rose* from the dead.' Instead of *rose*, Dr Webster would say in this place, *should rise*, and this correction he would carry through the language. Now on this we would remark, that any impropriety which may at first appear in this kind of construction, because the past tense is made, in this connexion, to express what is really future,—and if this is not the point of objection, we see not what is,—will at once vanish on reflecting, that the verb *rose*, in the verse above quoted, denotes what is past, only in reference to the verb *will be persuaded*. The past tense *rose*, from its connexion with the other verb, does in fact the office of a future; with this difference only, that the language is more definite. Of the two actions or events, that on the completion of which the other entirely depends, is, by this form of the verb, more clearly and definitely marked. In this respect, the verb *rose* corresponds with as much exactness as the structure of our language will admit, with the original Greek, from which this verse is translated; the verb there being an *aorist*, and bearing the same relation to the other verb, as *rose* does in the English version. This same mode of expressing the future subjunctive, is common in Latin; and indeed what is usually called the future subjunctive, is a second future indicative; or, according to the better

nomenclature in this place of Dr Webster, a *prior-future*. All the tenses of the subjunctive mode in Latin, are used in connexion with the future of some other verb, to express future time ; and a varied phraseology arises from this construction, which often contributes to the force and beauty of a sentence. Examples everywhere occur ; an instance of the pluperfect will illustrate what is intended. Cicero says to Atticus, 'Cum mihi, [libros] per legem Cinciam licere capere, Cincius amicus tuus diceret ; libenter, dixi, me accepturum, si *attulisset*.' (Lib. i. 20.) Here *attulisset* is past only in relation to *accepturum*, and as connected with *accepturum*, is future with respect to *dixi* ; and may be translated, 'I said that I would receive the books, if he *should bring them* ;' or, according to the form condemned by Dr Webster, 'if he *brought them*.' We have remarked, that any tense of the subjunctive in Latin, may be so used as to express future time. The verse in Luke above quoted, is so translated by Castalio, that the verb corresponding to *rose* is in the present tense. 'Si Mosem et vates non audiunt, ne si quidem quispiam ex mortuis *resurgat*, obtemperabunt.' Here *resurgat* is present in respect to *obtemperabunt*, and is therefore, in effect, future. We see no objection, then, to this construction of a sentence to express a future contingent event, on the ground of any contrariety between the tenses of the two verbs ; as the whole is always future in relation to the leading verb in the sentence ; on the contrary, it appears to us philosophically exact, and is often convenient for the purpose of varying a phrase, and saving the monotony of a too frequent recurrence of the auxiliaries.

This form is, moreover, sanctioned by the highest authorities in the language. Not to go back to the times immediately succeeding that in which the common version of the Scriptures was first published, we will come immediately to a few of those writers who have ever stood among the first for the purity of their idiom. Thus, *Swift*.—'Suppose I should discover some uneasiness to find myself, I *knew* not [Dr Webster, 'I *should not know*'] how, over head and ears in debt, although I *were* [Dr Webster, 'should be'] sure my tenants paid their rents very well, and that I never spent half my income ; they would certainly advise me to turn off Mr Oldfox, my receiver, and take another.' *Examiner*.

Again. 'If my neighbor and I *happened* [Dr Webster, 'should happen'] to have a misunderstanding about the delivery

of a message, what could I do less than strip and discard the rascal, who *carried* [Dr Webster, ‘*should carry*’] it.’ *Id.*

Again. ‘Writers would quickly be reduced to a very inconsiderable number, if men *were put* [Dr Webster, ‘*should be put*’] upon making books, with the fatal confinement of delivering nothing beyond what is to the purpose.’ *Tale of a Tub.*

Addison. ‘Another who came with him, told me, by my interpreter, he should be glad to do me any service that *lay* [Dr Webster, ‘*should lie*’] in his power.’ *Spectator*, No. 557.

Goldsmith. ‘The course, then, I would take, would be, whenever I *went* [Dr Webster, ‘*should go*’] out, to tell my wife where I was going.’ *Citizen of the World.* Lett. 19.

Middleton. ‘He [Cicero] could not but foresee, that it must needs be fatal to him, if it *passed* [Dr Webster, ‘*should pass*’] to the satisfaction of Antony and Lepidus; for he had several times declared, that he expected the last severity from them, if ever they *got* [Dr Webster, ‘*should get*’] the better.’ *Life of Cicero*, Sect. xi.

Gibbon. ‘But he [the Roman Pontiff] was astonished at the reply of the Khan, that the sons of god and of Zingis were invested with a divine power to subdue or extirpate the nations; and that the pope would be involved in the universal destruction, unless he *visited* [Dr Webster, ‘*should visit*’] in person, and as a suppliant, the royal horde.’ *Hist. Ch.* 64.

The relation of the past tense to the future in each of these examples is obviously explicable on the principle above stated; and the phraseology would be injured, as appears to us, by any change. This form of the verb is often to be met with, especially in Swift, Addison, and Middleton, who are among the most absolutely English of all English writers; and to discard it, would be, as we think, to condemn one of the very common, most exact, and best established idioms of the language. Still, as has been already said, we consider Dr Webster’s account of the verb, as a whole, much the best that has been published; but a complete exhibition of the powers of this part of speech, especially in the influence of the tenses upon each other in modifying their application, seems to be still a *desideratum* in English grammar.*

* The most clear and methodical exhibition of the Latin verb in its modes and tenses, and particularly in the connexion and succession of the tenses, is contained in Zumpt’s Latin Grammar, an edition

There are several other topics that we intended to discuss, which must now be passed by, and some of those which we have selected for consideration, have been treated perhaps more cursorily than their importance demands, or than is necessary to convey distinctly our own views and impressions. A few remarks only will be added.

The appearance of this dictionary, considering the circumstances under which it was begun, the amount of time and labor bestowed upon its composition, and the value of the improvements actually made, is an event upon which we may well congratulate the public. The proper effect of the author's labors in the cause of the language of his country, will not fail, sooner or later, to be produced. It will be seen in the better understanding of authors, who will ever be the boast of the English tongue; it will be seen in the more correct use of words, in the check which will be put on useless innovations, in the clearer distinction generally marked between new words which are necessary, and those which are merely the offspring of caprice, and we will add, in the increased respect, as we hope, with which the author will be viewed, for his talents, learning, and persevering industry. If we have ventured to differ in some particulars from this veteran philologist, it is because a frank exposition of our opinion is due to our readers; and indiscriminate praise, no doubt, is as little expected or wished for by him, as it is alien from our habits. Our criticisms on this work do not affect its substantial merits; these are manifest, and in despite of all attempts to conceal or decry them, they will be ultimately seen and acknowledged in their real number and value. One proof that this dictionary contains improvements, will probably soon be furnished in the use that will be made of it in compiling others. The author must prepare himself, if he is ever so greedy of praise, to be complimented in this way to his entire satisfaction. No new English dictionary will hereafter serve, either at home or abroad, for popular use, which does not contain many of the additions and corrections of this.

In this bustling and calculating age, when the value of all exertions is very near being measured by a standard of com-

of which, in this country, has been just announced. What Zumpt's Grammar is in Latin, Rost's Grammar, in many respects, is in Greek.

mercial loss and gain, there will undoubtedly be those, who will attach very little importance to some of the author's investigations. Why should we disturb ourselves, they will say, about the questions, whether the Celtic and Gothic languages are radically the same,—whether traces of Persian words may be found in English,—whether the Hebrew roots were at first biliteral, and whether our word *twit* is a compound. Such inquiries, it will be urged, are too remote in their object, lead us too far back into antiquity, and have too little connexion with what is visible and tangible. Supposing all these points satisfactorily settled,—how will they aid us in judging of the effects of the new tariff, the state of our agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing interests, or the defects of the banking system, or how will they guide us to new methods of applying the force of steam? We have no time to argue with men of this class; but to another description of our readers, who may themselves be occupied in other departments of literature and science, and may be disposed to ask questions like those above, we would say,—This case is not peculiar; the astronomer spends years in gazing at *nebulæ* in the heavens, or in calculating some new secular equation of a few seconds' amount; the botanist traverses continents to find new species of plants, and the geologist is digging the earth, hoping, perhaps, to find the bones of some extinct species of *megatheria* or *palæotheria*; or he is hunting for some proof of changes in the chaotic ocean, so distant in time, that in comparison with the space which has intervened, all known history is brought within a few years, and the first Celts and Goths, who wandered into Europe from the high plains of middle Asia, seem almost our cotemporaries. In all the great divisions of human knowledge, those who are extending its boundaries are led to similar inquiries. We consider all of them important; and when topics like these shall cease to interest, to enkindle zeal, and to incite to labor and study, no further proof will be wanting, that the human mind is slumbering at its post, and that ignorance is fast regaining its empire. We hope the author will go forward to improve his work; and he need not fear, that his labors will not finally be judged to have been practical, useful, and patriotic.

Whether this work will at once receive its due meed of praise, we will not venture to predict. 'There is a tide in the affairs of men,' and, emphatically, of authors; the times and quantity of which have never been reduced to exact calcula-

tion. The Rambler, in his second number, has enumerated various causes, why literary merit may pass without notice, and adds, what is peculiarly applicable to the author of a dictionary; that 'the learned are afraid to declare their opinion early, lest they should put their reputation in hazard; the ignorant always imagine themselves giving some proof of delicacy, when they refuse to be pleased; and he that finds his way to reputation through all these obstructions, must acknowledge that he is indebted to other causes besides his industry, his learning, or his wit.'

ART. X.—1. *The Atlantic Souvenir, a Christmas and New Year's Offering.* 1829. Philadelphia. Carey, Lea, & Carey.

2. *The Token, a Christmas and New Year's Present.* Edited by N. P. Willis. Boston. 1829. S. G. Goodrich.

3. *The Talisman, for MDCCCXXIX.* New York. E. Bliss.

WE may seem to have a somewhat less grave task in hand than common, in taking cognizance of the claims of these *pictured duodecimos*. But we have never been wont to estimate literature by the quantity, or to appraise the productions of intellect by the space which they occupy on paper. Nor yet have we ever found, in the natural history of books, that in these, as in the feathered tribes, sweetness of song is never combined with brilliancy of plumage. These volumes are indeed small in size and beautiful in binding, lettered in gold and full of plates, but not therefore the less will we acknowledge the excellence and beauty of their literary contents. Not every book that is biggest must needs be best, nor do most words always convey most information. *A little fire is better than much wood.* One stirring thought, one strong conception, one sound and useful maxim,—and it may as well be conveyed in the three words of a simple sentence, as hidden in the chaff of a folio,—is more deserving of the praise, and will better repay the consideration of the world, than 'an infinite deal of nothing.' And as to engravings and pictures and all the embellishments of a fair outside, they can do little harm; but when employed in adorning innocence or illustrating truth,